

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

OMB-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 NEAE-00 /061 W

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O R 260732Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 725

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

CINCEUR

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 2207

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

FOLLOWING MSG SENT JIDDA ON 26 MAR REPEATED TO U

QUOTE

RIYADH UNN

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FOR HORAN FROM AMBASSADOR

PLEASE PASS DEPARTMENT AND PERTINENT POSTS

SUBJ: DEATH AND BURIAL OF KING FAISAL

1. SHORTLY BEFORE 1100 MARCH 25 A NEPHEW AND NAMESAKE OF KING FAISAL, SON OF THE KING'S BROTHER MUSA'ID, SHOT HIM POINT BLANK IN THE FACE. HE DIED INSTANTANEOUSLY.

2. THE BROTHER OF THE ASSASSIN HAD BEEN KILLED SEVERAL YEARS AGO DURING THE ANTI-TELEVISION RIOTS INSPIRED BY RELIGIOUS FANATICS. FAISAL BIN MUSA'ID, HIS FATHER AND OTHER BROTHERS ASKED, AT THE TIME THAT THE POLICEMAN WHO HAD FIRED ON THE DEMONSTRATORS BE EXECUTED. PRINCE FAHD, THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, AND THE KING REFUSED. THE OFFICER HAD BEEN DOING HIS DUTY, THEY SAID, AND COULD NOT BE PUNISHED. THE YOUNG PRINCE EVIDENTLY BROODED OVER THIS FOR YEARS AND WHEN HE SHOT THE KING SHOUTED THAT HIS BROTHER WAS NOW AVENGED.

3. THE CAPITAL AND THE MAIN CITIES OF THE COUNTRY REMAINED CALM. THE FIVE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY MET ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AND SELECTED CROWN PRINCE KHALID AS THE NEW KING AND PRINCE FAHD AS CROWN PRINCE. THE POSITIONS OF PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER HELD BY KING FAISAL HAVE NOT BEEN FILLED BUT THE CONSENSUS-WITHOUT A SINGLE DEVIATION WE HAVE HEARD - IS THAT FAHD WILL BE THE TRUE RULER OF THE KINGDOM IF HE TAKES THE TITLE OF PRIME MINISTER OR NOT.

4. THE REIGN OF FAISAL WHICH BROUGHT SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES TO THE SOCIETY OF THE KINGDOM AND WHICH SAW ITS ROLE TRANSFORMED FROM A RATHER BACKWATER DESERT KINGDOM TO A WORLD POWER IN ENERGY AND FINANCE, ENDED IN AN INNOVATION WHICH SURELY BROUGHT BRIEF TO THE RELIGIOUS FANATICS. THERE WAS A FUNERAL - NOT ON THE ORDER OF THOSE OF PRESIDENTS KENNEDY OR DEGAULLE, TO BE SURE. BUT IN ITS OWN WAY IT WAS GRAND. HEADS OF STATE OF ALMOST ALL ARAB COUNTRIES, ALTHOUGH UNASKED, SAID THEY WERE COMING TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS, AND THEY DID. BHUTTO OF PAKISTAN, THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, AND PRINCE GHOLAM OF IRAN, AND (WE BELIEVE) THE PRESIDENT OF AFGHANISTAN ALSO CAME. THE ONLY CHRISTIAN COUNTRIES
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REPRESENTED WERE FRANCE BY ITS DEFENSE MINISTER, AND SPAIN BY JUAN CARLOS, AND THE UNITED STATES BY ITS AMBASSADOR IN JIDDA.

5. AT 1400 TODAY - MARCH 26-THE FOREIGN GUESTS, THE PRINCES AND THE TRIBAL LEADERS GATHERED UNDER A LARGE TENT IN CENTRAL RIYADH. (THE MINISTERS DID NOT ATTEND.) AT 1445 THE BODY WAS BROUGHT TO THE TENT. THE HEADS OF STATE, THEIR BODYGUARDS,

AND OTHER OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES AND NEWSMEN, IN A MAD SCRAMBLE GOT TO THE BODY. IT WAS WRAPPED IN A SOUD AND SUPPORTED BY HIS SONS. IN AN EVEN GREATER INNOVATION, THE DIGNITARIES AND OTHERS THEN WENT TO THE MOSQUE. ALL OF THEM WENT; THE CHRISTIAN NOTABLES, EVEN HIS MOST CATHOLIC HIGHNESS, JUAN CARLOS, AND CAMILLE CHAMOUN OF LEBANON, ENTERED THE MOSQUE AND STOOD IN A CORNER FOR THE FINAL PRAYERS.

6. AS THE BODY WAS TAKEN OUT OF THE MOSQUE THE OTHER RESIDENT AMBASSADORS(WHO HAD BEEN BROUGHT FROM JIDDA TO A SPECIAL PLANE) ARRIVED.

7 THE BODY WAS THEN LOADED ONTO AN AMBULANCE AND TAKEN TO THE CEMETARY BY HIS SONS - NO OTHERS ACCOMPANIED IT.

8. THE KING WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN PLEASED WITH THE FUSS. HE WAS A SIMPLE MAN AND THE IDEA OF KINGS AND PRESIDENTS JOSTLING EACH OTHER TO PAY RESPECT TO HIS MORTAL REMAINS WOULD HAVE BEEN OFFENSIVE. HE HAD NOT SENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FUNERALCSOF PGESIDENT KENNEDY OR PRESIDENT DEGAULLE AND HE WOULD NOT HAVE EXPECTED ANYONE TO COME HERE TO RIYADH TO LOOK ON WHAT HE HAD CALLED "A LUMP OF CLAY WRAPPED IN A RAG". THE FAMILY DID TRY TO MAINTAIN SIMPLICITY. IT WAS JUST THAT THEY COULD NOT BRING THEMSELVES TO TURNING AWAY GUESTS WHO INVITED THEMSELVES. THEY FOUND THEMSELVES WITH A BIGGER GROUP OF FOREIGNERS THAN THEY COULD HANDLE. THEY DID THEIR BEST. THEY EVACUATED THE BIGGEST HOTEL IN THE CITY FOR THE GUESTS LAST NIGHT AHE THEY PROVIDED SOME TRANSPORTATION. BUT THEIR ORGANIZATION WAS STRAINED BEYOND THE BREAKING POINT-AND IT BROKE DOWN. EVERYONE TOOK CARE OF HIMSELF AS BEST HE COULD. BY TOMORROW THE NEW ORGANIZATION WILL HAVE BEGUN.AKINS UNQUOGTE AKINS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BURIAL CUSTOMS, REPRESENTATION AT CEREMONIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975JIDDA02207
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750106-0184
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750314/aaaaamph.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <24 SEP 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEATH AND BURIAL OF KING FAISAL
TAGS: PFOR, SA, (FAISAL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006